

# Avalanche hits Bridal Veil Falls

By PAT CHRISTIAN  
The Daily Herald

A Provo Canyon avalanche destroyed part of the world's steepest aerial tram attraction at Bridal Veil Falls early today.

Authorities were alerted to the avalanche at 2:30 a.m. and were told it had cascaded from the south side of the canyon over Bridal Veil Falls.

Another avalanche was still threatening to break loose near Bridal Veil Falls from the north side of the canyon.

Initially, fears rose as the snow slide, estimated to be as deep as 50 feet and a quarter-mile long, dammed the Provo River, quickly forming a growing artificial lake.

Fears of the snow dam led authorities to evacuate the downstream community of Springdell as well as a number of other downstream homes.

But by 9:30 a.m. fears let up. Utah County Sheriff's Department spokesman Lt. Ron Fernstedt had just returned from an inspection of the avalanche site made around 9 a.m. He said the river was being diverted from the river channel above Bridal Veil Falls at the Olmstead diversion dam.

Provo City water engineer Merrill Bingham said the only water backing up as of press time was the water tumbling from Bridal Veil Falls itself.

Bingham said the difference between this morning's avalanche and the one that damaged the canyon attraction in 1986, is that this slide seemed more massive.

He said that in past slides, the



Daily Herald Photo/Jason Olson

Jennifer Lindstrom, left, Dave Radnell and Danny Foote, all members of the Utah County Search and Rescue Team, investigate the site of an avalanche early today in Provo Canyon that did extensive damage to the Bridal Veil Falls aerial tram attraction.

river has been allowed to erode a pathway through the slide rather than forcing human intervention. He said this has resulted in the slowest release of the artificial lake that forms behind the slide.

Bingham said that same tack

will probably be used again.

As the water does break through the snow dam, the city may have to take steps to avoid or reduce debris and particles entering the Provo's drinking water.

Speaking of the new "lake,"

Fernstedt said, "I'd say maybe it's 15, maximum 20 feet deep, not very much width and not very much danger. The county engineer has assessed the danger; he doesn't

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## SLIDE:

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think feel it's that significant."

Fernstedt was asked if anyone is believed to be trapped under the snow.

"At this time we don't believe there is anyone trapped in the avalanche," he replied.

The sheriff's spokesman said the tram building/store at the popular attraction is extensively damaged both by strong winds propelled by the avalanche and the slide itself.

"The building there is damaged quite extensively, but the cables are still in and the upper tram station is still in," Fernstedt said. He said the slide covers the old Highway 189, but does not block the new, upper highway.

Because of the threat of other avalanches in the area, the canyon was closed until about 11 a.m.

"I hope it is all a dream," said Provoan David Grow, who owns the canyon attraction. He was interviewed around 8 a.m. and before actually inspecting his property. Grow said he learned of the avalanche around 5 a.m.

"They won't let me up, but what I'm hearing is that there is

nothing left. I heard they couldn't clear the road because the cables were tangling up their equipment."

Fernstedt's account said the actual tram cables remained intact.

Grow said the attraction was not insured. "We figure that mother earth and father sky have had their say, and we will listen. The last big avalanche was in '86 and it wiped out our snack bar.

After the Feb. 18 avalanche, an old railroad caboose was brought in and converted into a new snack bar.

"Two or three years ago, when we had a much smaller avalanche, there were two ice climbers staying in a camper that was totally wiped out by the slide. They were lucky to come out alive," Grow said.

The threat of avalanches has also led to the closing of American Fork Canyon.

Some of those who were evacuated from Provo Canyon homes this morning were temporarily housed in churches.

Bill Alder, chief meteorologist for the National Weather Service, said the Provo avalanche originated at several locations higher up in the mountains and combined into one slide. It came from an area that had received 19 inches of new snow since Monday.



Crossword	D5
Legals	C8
Lifestyle	C5
Movies	C6
Obituaries	B2
Opinions	A6
Sports	C1
State	B3
Television	C6
World	A7

## Weather

Heavy snow warning tonight. Additional accumulation 1-3 inches mainly in Utah County. Lows 15-20. Thursday mostly cloudy with a chance of snow mainly Utah County. Highs near 30. See Page A5.

## Air Quality

Today is a "green" wood burning day. Today's air quality was good for all areas along the Wasatch Front. The forecast calls for slightly increasing pollution levels. See Page A2.

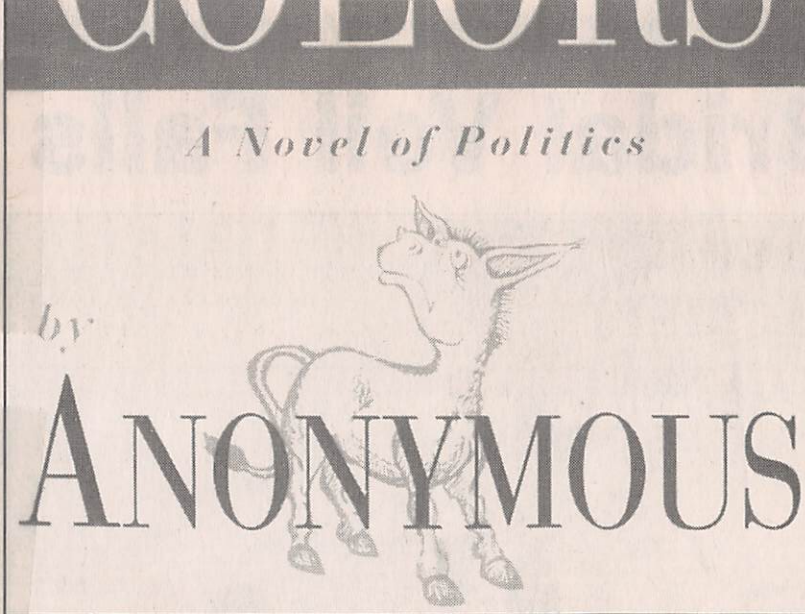
Even so, there is some perceptible easing of the administration's firm embrace of the Russian president as he battles health problems and critics of his painful tight-money policy.

Vice President Al Gore emphasized Tuesday that it was Russia's conversion to political democracy and a free market economy that the United States supports — and Yeltsin or any other Russian leader on that pathway.

"We do not support any candidate in the Russian elections, nor do we see any individual as the sole guarantor of reform in Russia," Gore said at a news conference, with Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin standing beside him.

"We support a set of principles, not a single individual," Gore added in response to a reporter's question.

With the \$9 billion credit line due for decision in the International Monetary Fund in two weeks, President Clinton and Gore both endorsed what would be the largest loan ever extended to Russia and the second largest to any country.



AP Photo

This photograph taken Tuesday shows the book jacket of *Primary Colors*, a hot-selling novel about President Clinton's last presidential campaign. The novel has Washington and the American literary world looking for the true identity of one of the world's latest best-selling authors — a person identified only as "Anonymous."

Arkansas Gov. Clinton). McLeod has tapes.

"In spite of its sins, it is far and away the best thing I have read about the 1992 campaign," wrote author Michael Lewis in a New York Times review. He speculated

that the author might be Stephanopoulos, who has denied it.

CNN's "Larry King Live" devoted an hour to possible authors Tuesday night without a confession. A dozen new names cropped up.

protect their records as a matter of personal privacy, may do so simply by checking a box on their registration forms or writing the Motor Vehicles Division," Hunt said, noting that thousands of drivers have already done this.

Carlson's bill, Hunt said, provides access for a wide range of commercial entities, but would cut off the public that pays to maintain the records, as well as journalists who use the data for a variety of purposes.

Among the ways journalists

Jay Evensen, SPJ chapter president, said the society would lobby legislators to halt the bill at the House floor. "We went through this last year, and we hope the legislators act as they did last year," he said. The House never called the bill up for debate last year, allowing it to die on the bill list.

Rep. Brian R. Allen, R-Salt Lake City, said the bill will do more harm than good. Using a hypothetical situation, Allen said if one of his children was being

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